

ILLINOIS SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER TUITION WAIVER (SETTW) PROGRAM

TITLE 23: EDUCATION AND CULTURAL RESOURCES
SUBTITLE A: EDUCATION
CHAPTER XIX: ILLINOIS STUDENT ASSISTANCE COMMISSION

PART 2765

ILLINOIS SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER TUITION WAIVER (SETTW) PROGRAM

Section

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AUTHORITY: Implementing Section 65.15 and authorized by Sections 20(f) and 65.15(a)(2) of the Higher Education Student Assistance Act [110 ILCS 947/20(f) and 65.15].

SOURCE: Adopted at 19 Ill. Reg. 8354, effective July 1, 1995; amended at 20 Ill. Reg. 9194, effective July 1, 1996; old Part repealed and new Part adopted at 21 Ill. Reg. 11129, effective July 18, 1997; amended at 22 Ill. Reg. 11107, effective July 1, 1998; amended at 24 Ill. Reg. 9159, effective July 1, 2000; amended at 26 Ill. Reg. 10037, effective July 1, 2002; amended at 27 Ill. Reg. 10405, effective July 1, 2003; amended at 28 Ill. Reg. 9170, effective July 1, 2004; amended at 29 Ill. Reg. 9941, effective July 1, 2005; amended at 30 Ill. Reg. 11697, effective July 1, 2006; amended at 35 Ill. Reg. 12388, effective July 15, 2011; amended at 37 Ill. Reg. 9550, effective July 1, 2013; amended at 38 Ill. Reg. 13402, effective July 1, 2014; amended at 41 Ill. Reg. 8134, effective July 1, 2017; amended at 42 Ill. Reg. 13657, effective July 1, 2018; amended at 46 Ill. Reg. 12094, effective July 1, 2022, amended at 48 Ill. Reg. 4487, effective March 8, 2024.

Section 2765.10 Summary and Purpose

- a) The Illinois Special Education Teacher Tuition Waiver (SETTW) Program encourages current teachers and academically talented students to pursue careers as Illinois public, private or parochial preschool or elementary or secondary school teachers in any area of Special Education.
- b) This Part establishes the rules which govern the Illinois SETTW Program. Additional rules and definitions are contained in General Provisions, 23 Ill. Adm. Code 2700.

(Source: Amended at 28 Ill. Reg. 9170, effective July 1, 2004)

Section 2765.20 Applicant Eligibility

- a) A qualified applicant shall be:
 - 1) a United States citizen or an eligible noncitizen;
 - 2) a resident of Illinois;
 - 3) a graduate of an approved high school; a student scheduled to graduate from an approved high school by the end of the academic year in which the award is made who ranks in the upper half of the high school graduating class at the end of the sixth semester; or a person holding a valid teaching license that is not in the discipline of Special Education;
 - 4) enrolled, or accepted for enrollment, as an undergraduate or graduate student seeking initial licensure in any area of Special Education as determined by the university;
 - 5) attending, or planning to attend, Chicago State University, Eastern Illinois University, Governors State University, Illinois State University, Northeastern Illinois University, Northern Illinois University, Southern Illinois University (Carbondale), Southern Illinois University (Edwardsville), University of Illinois (Chicago), University of Illinois (Springfield), University of Illinois (Urbana) or Western Illinois University; and
 - 6) a potential new recipient in that the applicant shall have not received the Illinois Special Education Teacher Tuition Waiver in the past.

- b) In any academic year in which the qualified applicant accepts or receives financial assistance through the Paul Douglas Teacher Scholarship (23 Ill. Adm. Code 2762), the Minority Teachers of Illinois Scholarship (23 Ill. Adm. Code 2763), the Golden Apple Scholars of Illinois Program (23 Ill. Adm. Code 2764), or Teach Illinois Scholarship Program (23 Ill. Adm. Code 2768), the applicant shall not be eligible for an Illinois Special Education Teacher Tuition Waiver.

(Source: Amended at 46 Ill. Reg. 12094, effective July 1, 2022)

Section 2765.30 Program Procedures

- a) A completed ISAC application for the Illinois SETTW Program must be

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postmarked on or before March 1 immediately preceding the academic year for which the tuition waiver is being requested, in order to receive priority consideration for an award.

- b) An application for the Illinois SETTW Program is available on ISAC's website.
- c) If the student section of an application is incomplete, ISAC will notify the applicant. The applicant will then have an opportunity to furnish the missing information; however, the application will be considered for processing as of the date when the student section is complete and received by ISAC.
- d) ISAC shall annually award 250 Illinois Special Education Teacher Tuition Waivers as provided in this subsection (e).
 - 1) Currently Licensed Teachers
 - A) A maximum of 40 tuition waivers may be awarded annually to qualified applicants who hold a valid teaching license that is not in the discipline of Special Education.
 - B) If more than 40 applicants qualify under these provisions, a lottery shall be used to select 40 recipients.
 - 2) Applicants Graduating from High School in the Current Award Year
 - A) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (e)(4), a minimum of 105 tuition waivers shall be awarded annually to students scheduled to graduate from an approved high school in the academic year in which the award is made and who rank in the upper half of their class at the end of the sixth semester.
 - B) ISAC shall select recipients under this subsection (e)(2) from among qualified applicants based on the highest ACT or SAT scores from the time periods set forth in the State Scholar Program (23 Ill. Adm. Code 2760.20(b), (c) and (d), as converted according to the Illinois Standard Test Score table (Section 2760.30(c)).
 - C) If the number of qualified applicants sharing the same Illinois Standard Test Score exceeds the number of tuition waivers to be awarded, a lottery shall be used to select the awardees.
 - 3) Applicants Not Graduating from High School in the Current Award Year

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- A) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (e)(4), a minimum of 105 tuition waivers shall be awarded annually to qualified applicants who have graduated from an approved high school prior to the academic year in which the award is made.
 - B) If the number of qualified applicants exceeds the number of tuition waivers to be awarded, a lottery shall be used to select the awardees.
- 4) Rollover of Unused Tuition Waivers
- A) Any of the available tuition waivers not awarded under subsection (e)(1) shall be added to the pool of available waivers under subsection (e)(2).
 - B) If the number of qualified applicants under subsection (e)(2) or (e)(3) is insufficient to utilize all of the waivers available under those subsections, the remainder shall be transferred to the pool of waivers under the other subsection if the other subsection has qualified applicants who have not yet been awarded a waiver.
- e) Notice of eligibility will be sent by July 1 to each qualified applicant who is selected to receive a tuition waiver. The qualified applicant is then responsible for providing a copy of the notice of eligibility to the institution. All other qualified applicants will be notified that they were not selected.
- f) Tuition waivers are applicable towards credit for any semester/quarter within an academic year.
- g) A recipient shall be exempt from paying tuition and mandatory fees for up to four calendar years.
- h) A recipient may be granted a leave of absence by the president of the institution, or the president's designee, for the following reasons:
- 1) earning funds to defray the recipient's educational expenses;
 - 2) illness of the recipient or a member of the recipient's immediate family, as established by the sworn statement of a licensed physician; or
 - 3) military service.

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- i) A recipient must complete the course of study within six years including leaves of absence. A recipient must remain enrolled on a continuous basis during the regular school year for four years, unless granted a leave of absence. However, a leave of absence granted for military service shall not be considered part of the six years within which a recipient must complete a degree.

- j) Prior to receiving assistance, the qualified applicant must sign a Teaching Agreement/Promissory Note, which must be submitted to ISAC. The Teaching Agreement/Promissory Note shall include the following stipulations:
 - 1) the recipient pledges to begin teaching on a full-time basis, in the field of Special Education, within one year following graduation from or termination of enrollment in a teacher education program, at a nonprofit, public, private or parochial preschool, elementary or secondary school in Illinois and to continue teaching for at least 2 of the 5 years immediately following;
 - 2) if the teaching requirement is not fulfilled, the tuition waiver converts to a loan and the recipient must repay the entire amount of the tuition waiver (prorated according to the fraction of the teaching obligation not completed), plus interest at a rate equal to 5% per annum; and
 - 3) the recipient agrees to provide ISAC with evidence of compliance with program requirements (e.g., responses to annual follow-up questionnaires, etc.).

- k) The five-year time period during which the teaching requirement must be fulfilled may be extended if the recipient:
 - 1) serves, for not more than three years, as a member of the United States Armed Forces;
 - 2) is enrolled full-time in an academic program related to the field of teaching, leading to a graduate or postgraduate degree;
 - 3) is temporarily totally disabled for a period of time not to exceed three years, as established by the sworn affidavit of a qualified physician;
 - 4) is actively seeking but unable to find full-time employment as a teacher at an Illinois public, private, or parochial school for one continuous period not to exceed two years, and is able to provide evidence of that fact;

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- 5) is taking additional courses, on at least a half-time basis, needed to obtain licensure as a teacher in Illinois; or
 - 6) is fulfilling teaching requirements associated with other programs administered by ISAC if the recipient cannot concurrently fulfill them in a period of time equal to the length of the teaching obligation.
- l) A recipient shall enter repayment status on the earliest of the following dates:
- 1) the first day of the first calendar month after the recipient has ceased to pursue a course of study leading to initial licensure as a teacher in Special Education, but not until six months have elapsed after the cessation of at least half-time enrollment in such a course of study. A recipient who has transferred and is waiting to be accepted into the Special Education program at the new university shall not be subject to this provision provided the recipient is enrolled and is pursuing course work that meets the new university's requirements to gain admission to the Special Education program;
 - 2) the date the recipient informs ISAC that the recipient does not plan to fulfill the teaching obligation; or
 - 3) the latest date upon which the recipient must have begun teaching in order to complete the teaching obligation within five years after completing the postsecondary education for which the waiver was awarded.
- m) If a recipient is required to repay any portion of a tuition waiver awarded prior to July 1, 2014, the repayment period shall be completed within five years after the tuition waiver converts to a loan. If a recipient is required to repay any portion of a tuition waiver awarded after July 1, 2014, the repayment period shall be completed within 10 years after the tuition waiver converts to a loan. Repayment periods may be extended if a recipient:
- 1) serves, for not more than three years, as a member of the United States Armed Forces;
 - 2) is temporarily disabled, for not more than three years, as established by the sworn affidavit of a licensed physician;
 - 3) is pursuing a graduate or postgraduate degree and is enrolled on a full-time basis for one continuous period of time not to exceed three years;

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- 4) is seeking and unable to find full-time employment for one continuous period not to exceed two years and is able to provide evidence of that fact; or
- 5) withdraws from a course of study leading to teacher licensure in Special Education but remains enrolled on at least a half-time basis in another academic discipline.
- n) During the time a recipient qualifies for any of the extensions listed in subsection (m) of this Section, the recipient shall not be required to make payments and interest shall not continue to accrue.
- o) *If a recipient who enters into repayment under subsection (j) subsequently, within 5 years of entering repayment, begins to teach at a school meeting the description under subsection(j)(1), the amount owed by the recipient may be reduced in proportion to the amount of the teaching obligation completed. [110 ILCS 947/50]*
- p) A recipient shall not be required to pay the amount of the tuition and fees waived if the recipient becomes permanently totally disabled, as established by the sworn affidavit of a licensed physician (see e.g., 34 CFR 682.402(c)), or if the recipient's representative provides ISAC with a death certificate or other evidence that the recipient has died.
- q) A holder of a tuition waiver must register for enrollment in a special education program of teacher education within ten days after the beginning of the term for which the tuition waiver was initially awarded. If the recipient fails to comply with this requirement, the tuition waiver will be forfeited and ISAC will award it to another qualified applicant.

(Source: Amended at 48 Ill. Reg. 4487, effective March 8, 2024)

Section 2765.40 Institutional Procedures

- a) When a recipient graduates, withdraws or otherwise ceases to be enrolled in a Special Education program, the institution shall certify to ISAC the total amount of tuition and fees that have been waived on behalf of the recipient.
- b) If a qualified applicant is eligible for both a tuition waiver and grant assistance under the Monetary Award Program (MAP) (23 Ill. Adm. Code 2735), the tuition waiver must be used first.
- c) ISAC shall be notified by the institution of a recipient's leave of absence.

(Source: Amended at 22 Ill. Reg. 11107, effective July 1, 1998)